

“UNRESPECTED HISTORIC LANDSCAPES: THE CASE OF TODAY’S
LATIUM RECONSTRUCTED THROUGH THE DIARIES, DRAWINGS
AND PAINTINGS BY MASTER COLE BETWEEN 1831 AND 1842”

[...]Those were bright hours my loving mem’ry sees
when by the convent gray I sat – beneath the trees
that shadowy wave on Mont Albano’s top [...]
And Rome was at my feet, but far below,
its ruined heaps still sparkling in the glow [...]
Around the wide Campagna’s waste of green
lay like a shipless sea – though wrecks were seen
of duct and tower – many a golden chain
on its breast broken – ne’er to join again-
Soracte like an island shone afar
the Sabine mountains made the eastern bar
while on the west – the tideless beauteous sea
pillowed the plain that slumb’red tranquilly -

Thomas Cole, July 1834, from *The Painter’s
Lamentation*

This research, in its nature essentially interdisciplinary, is to suggest, on the one hand, the validity of the works of art of Master Thomas Cole as an extraordinary historical documentation of some Italian landscapes and, on the other hand, it is going to offer some examples of bad ruling or degradation of splendid environmental and monumental sites in Italy. Master Cole’s works on Italy become a very fruitful source for an history of the Italian landscape changes.

This research has its place in the context of a general trend of theoretical interests and studies which I have been coming out in the last fifteen years, working in the Ministry of Cultural and Environmental Affairs, in Rome, as an expert on landscape and its preservation, and operating at the University of Viterbium (North Latium) as a professor of Geography. More particularly, in the last ten years I have been interested in Environmental Ethics and in the protection of Nature theories, a fundamental topic of the Geography for our generation.

Studying in this specific field, I was, of course, in the United States, where this kind of environmental thinking was pioneered during last century. In the New York State, some years ago, I had the chance to consult the personal Archives of one of the most interesting

¹ For the present research, Mrs. Barbara Assanti has worked on the difficult task of ordering and transcribing Thomas Cole’s Papers, processed in 1935 by the New York State Library.

Master Cole’s papers, received from the Artist’s grand-daughter, are kept by the New York State Library, Albany, New York.

For the extract from *The Painter’s Lamentation*, see Tymn, 1972, pp. 69-71.

personalities of the American Environmental Movement at its beginning in the first half of the nineteenth century.

That Personality is Master Thomas Cole. Born to English parents in 1801, he emigrated to North America in 1818, after having directly experienced the humanized, historical landscapes of the Old World. He died very young of a virulent pneumonia, in 1848.

He was a great painter, a writer, a poet and a humanist, but also a subtle geographer and a clever *amateur naturaliste*, as well as a famous essayist and a generous opinion-maker, deeply involved in the exaltation of Nature among the Americans of his times and in stimulating its legal preservation in the United States of America. In effect, he was a hero in the United States, but his work and theoretical role, his great charisma are not well known in Europe and particularly in Italy in spite of his important artistic works and writings concerning our country.

In this short congress paper we have no time to enter into details in the complex, fascinating world of such a Master, who was also, in New York State, the founder of the so-called Hudson River School of painting, deriving its name from the river where Cole had his Atelier in a secluded spot, that rapidly became a spiritual meeting-point for artists as well as for intellectuals. The Hudson River painters are considered the first truly American artist group, independent of the European tradition for its theoretical convictions and pictorial aims, interested in representing Nature in its spontaneous conditions and geographical manifestations, and not as a simple frame of human life, activities and emotions.

As I have described in a previous essay on that American artist circle (Oraezie Vallino, 1993), for Thomas Cole and his followers, American native, distinctive art had to find its creative subject in the immense, titanic, pathless, untamed American Wilderness, in contrast to the cultural or rural historical landscape, typical of the Old World where the hand of man is predominant.²

From a spiritual point of view, the immensity of the American Wilderness, and its total freedom, suggested the association with the Creator; Wilderness was felt as the living sign of God, a medium which elevates the human soul by offering a true religious contact. As Thomas Cole indicated in his *Essay on American Scenery*, published in 1836, the American Wilderness is to be considered an enormous natural temple, having no counterpart in the Old World, rich in monuments and artistic creations, yet where Nature has lost its spontaneity, where its forms are modified, controlled and polished by human action.³ Besides, from a political point of view, for the first American generations of the 1800, having just cut their links with Europe after the 1700 war and the Declaration of Independence, the Wilderness, the true, immense American Monument, became the symbol itself of their generous and free new Nation (Miller, 1984; Wilmerding, 1989; Novak, 1995).

In brief, for the cultivated *milieux* of the United States, of which the Hudson River artists were the significant spokesmen, the untamed, untouched American Wilderness meant

² The Hudson River School was active until about 1875. The most famous artists of that group were A.B. Durand, F.E. Church, S.R. Gifford, J.F. Kensett, W. Whittredge, A. Bierstadt, M.J. Heade, J.W. Casilear, W.T. Richards, D. Johnson, W.L. Sonntag, J. McEntee, J. Cropsey and finally G. Inness, particularly for his first pictorial period.

For the artistic point of view of this "native American art" and for Master Cole as theoretical initiator, see J.Th. Flexner, vol. III, II ed., 1970, pp. 3-86. In particular, for the idea of Wilderness and its values in America, see: J.K. Howat ed., 1987; R.Nash, 1982; B. Novak, Revised Edition, 1995.

³ All the themes on the values of the American Wilderness in opposition to the European Historic Landscape are expressed by Th. Cole, in "Essay on American Scenery", *The American Monthly Magazine*, Jan. 1836, 1-12.

sublimity. That theoretical movement was quick to provide also a concrete development in defense of Nature from a legal, administrative approach. The sensibility to the Natural Organism expressed by Thomas Cole and the Hudson River artists, and their love for the grandiose creativity and majestic manifestations of Nature were fundamental at the origin of the idea itself regarding the preservation of Nature and social concern about its legal protection.

For Thomas Cole, therefore, Nature was an aesthetic, philosophical, political programme. He felt Nature as a source of intellectual vigor and artistic inspiration. He wanted to understand its value – moral and social.

In this way of considering Nature, Thomas Cole shunned the canons tied strictly to a certain taste, a taste unavoidably changing as time passes and social-cultural contexts vary. For Cole Nature must not be necessarily “beautiful” in order to arouse admiration and have value; Nature itself deserves respect, even when it is not scenographic. It is an ethical subject and a matter of ethics.

For Cole, as well as for about twenty painters of the Hudson River School, the artistic work implied therefore living in a close observation of Nature and all geographical features, away from man.

After his experience living all absorbed, and physically immersed, in the Wilderness of the New York state and New England, Master Cole arrived in Italy for a first tour in 1831 and stayed until 1833. He made a second journey from 1841 to 1842.

He went to Lombardy, Venetia, Tuscany and visited Latium, Campania and Sicily. Unlike his American predecessors (Jaffe, 1989; Stebbins Jr., 1992), Thomas Cole, in Italy, too, following his theoretical beliefs about Nature, guided his painting style away from intellectualized “classical veduta”, *sticto sensu*, from the “picturesque, humanized landscape tradition” of European art, by placing the pure physical-geographical features and atmospheric conditions at the very center of each work, as essential subjects of his drawings and paintings.⁴

Feeling Nature in the way described above, when in Italy Master Cole was not particularly involved in the intellectual, refined scenery in Tuscany and Venetia, and in their historical rural landscapes, but, more than in other regions, he was captured by the vast, empty Agro Romano and Southern Latium, by the rugged forms of inland Campania as well as by the unsettled coasts from Gaeta to Salerno, and by the unbroken solitude and solemnity of scenes of Nature in Sicily.

In addition, in these three regions another geographical subject was particularly significant for Master Cole: it was the Volcano, felt as a *Genius Loci*, as the symbol of the power of Nature, the untamed dynamism of Nature, which appears in an important group of drawings and paintings of his Italian artistic production.

As we notice also in the abovementioned *Essay on American Scenery*, the important theoretical writing published after his first Italian tour, Cole in Italy always seems to be attracted by some peculiar situation that he always combines in his Italian pictures, as we can appreciate from the photographs illustrating this paper. In the first place, the sky is a quite important environmental element in Cole’s art, felt by the Artist as a living organism, geographically ever changing and offering a new visage. Cole was famous for his work on sky and for his incredible virtuosity in describing it with its shades and colourful nuances, with all its movements and passing clouds, as well as for his representation of atmosphere, palpably luminous. Secondly, mountains are a fundamental, solemn presence in Cole’s

⁴ See also Th. E. Stebbins, 1992, pp. 43-45.

paintings, particularly in the Italian artistic production; they are for him the best fitting physical environment to symbolize the power of Nature.

Our research started from the extraordinary historical-geographical documentation supplied by Thomas Cole in order to focus on the conditions of some Italian landscapes in his times and look at Italy with the sensitive eyes of an artist from the New World. Our attention was directed towards the above mentioned regions, especially interesting for Master Cole, and where environmental stress has been particularly strong during the post-war decades.

Our research proceeded in coordinating six series of written material from his personal archives, and three series of artistic matters, all fundamental sources of information.

Regarding Master Thomas Cole's personal Archives, we want to underline the fact that they are composed of six linear meters of papers and different types of writing, approximately five thousand hand-written pages, processed in six long-microfilms.

After examining all the archive material left by Master Cole, in order to have a complete knowledge of his thought, we had to select all the parts strictly concerning Italy and the Italian experiences of the Artist himself, precisely the six mentioned sets of written material. In particular: Master Cole's geographical annotations concerning Italy, which are all over in the pages of his personal Archives; his references to Italy in his letters, often written a long time after his two journeys to Italy (his personal correspondence is composed of more than six hundred letters); his observations on Italy from his personal life "*Journals*" (approximately six hundred pages); his detailed accounts and descriptions from his four "*Voyage diaries*", specifically concerning his two trips in Italy (almost one hundred pages); his references to Italy from his twenty theoretical essays or pamphlets (about half of them were never published); and his poems about Italy or also his poetic allusions to Italy.⁵

Out of this selected written documentation on Italian landscapes we have chosen only the parts focusing on the three regions we have indicated as particularly impressive for Master Cole: Latium, Campania, Sicily. Well, going through Cole's Archives, we were journeying from "*the wonders of Rome*" to the "*beauties of Naples*", "*city of the soul*", travelling south to the "*solemn quietness*" of Sicily, just to quote the Artist.⁶

Then we went on to co-ordinate what we had selected from Cole's Archives with his artistic work, obviously concerning Italy, consisting in a splendid group of oil paintings (about thirty-five are held today in many American Museums and Institutions) and a fascinating series of preparatory-drawings as well as completed drawings made during his two trips into Italy. Concerning the latter, we were able to examine about thirty-five prepared in Rome and Latium, twenty-five in Campania and twenty from Sicily; also very important is the long series of sketches collected in various sketchbooks, a precious *corpus*, growing during Master Cole's Italian tours, documenting his itineraries together with the four above mentioned "*Voyage diaries*".⁷

⁵ One hundred and five pieces of poetry have been actually printed, but about ten poems were never published and, among them, there are very long poems concerning his idea of Nature and Wilderness; we also want to mention a large number of poetic fragments and groups of verses never published. The printed work of poetry was edited by M.B. Tynn, *Thomas Cole Poetry*, Liberty Cap Books, York, Penn., 1972.

⁶ From Cole's Archives, quotations from: *Cole's letter to Gilmor, July 7th, 1832*, and from Cole's essay "*Sicilian Scenery and Antiquity*", 1844 (see on Note 8).

⁷ To date about ten oils by Master Cole result unlocated, but we know their subjects from Thomas Cole's descriptions in his Archives. The drawings and sketchbooks are conserved in the Detroit Institute of Arts, but several drawings are also owned by private art-collectors. This situation causes serious difficulty in the

The drawings and sketches, made *en plein-air*, are to be considered real fundamental sources of information about Cole's activities in Italy and his way of feeling Italian Nature. In fact they offer a description of geographical details, views of Nature and landscapes having captured the attention of the Artist during his excursions in the Italian countryside, which were not always transformed in specific oil paintings by the Artist himself at a later time. Just to mention some of them, taken from very well known places, we can remember Cole's pencil works on the Volterra, Albano lake, the bay of Naples, Capri, the coast of Salerno and also along the slopes of the Vesuvio.

In addition, his sketchbooks have very many notes on the sides of the pages: they give minute observations about the features of the physical habitat, the colours of Nature, wooded spots, as well as about the presence of fields and rural areas or about archaeological and architectonical structures. Consequently, as far as the geographical and environmental reconstruction is concerned, this corpus of artistic material is certainly of great significance.⁸

In brief, this production of Master Cole constitute a formidable body which has not to be separated from his artistic production, as well as his pictorial work proceeds with his poetry, following the ancient statement of Horace "*ut pictura poësis*".⁹

Combining all the special geo-historical sources supplied by Cole, we can say, that his Archives together with his artistic works, in their whole, reconstruct the Italian local landscape as it was in the nineteenth century.

Passing to the second step of our research, our aim was the exact identification of the central subject of each painting or pencil work made by Master Cole, the localization of their environmental setting and the recognition of geographical spots or features represented in them. During this specific phase of our work, an important collaboration was provided, for our surveys, by the scientific competence of a Roman archaeologist, Mr. Stefano Musco, a member of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Affairs in Rome, and a Roman Geomorphologist, Mrs. Silvana D'Angelo, a member of the Geological Italian Service in Rome, who had already been with us in various interdisciplinary researches concerning the historical reconstruction of geographical landscapes.

At this stage of our work, moreover, an interesting aspect was offered by some topographical and archaeological publications of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (e.g. for the Roman Campagna, Thomas Ashby's and Giuseppe Tomassetti's writings), describing the same landscapes before the wasting impact of postwar chaotic settlements: in fact they show an intermediate condition between Cole's times and the present day's situation.

The final step of our work was to compare – for each artistic work by Cole – the landscape he described with today's condition of the place, by using the aerial photographs provided by the Roman company SIAT- which we gratefully- and by taking pictures from the same spot chosen by Master Cole one hundred and sixty years ago.¹⁰

process of a study, because the material left by Master Cole was divided into two groups: the written archival documents are conserved in Albany, New York and his drawings as well as his sketches with the Artist's notes are held in Detroit, Michigan.

⁸ Concerning Sicily, we also have another precious source of information, the essay "*Sicilian Scenery and Antiquity*", written by Cole in 1843 and published one year later by the *Knickerbocker New York Magazine* and by the *Catskill Messenger*.

⁹ Q. Horatius Flaccus, *a Pisone*, 361. It was the Artist's motto: see also Th.E. Stebbins Jr., ed., *The Lure of Italy*, 1993, p.43.

¹⁰ For some special sites, we have also had the opportunity to compare the geographical situation pictured by Cole with the paintings of other Artists of the Hudson River group, following their Master in the same

Therefore, in coordinating all these sources, documents and material and obviously thanks to Master Cole's topographical accuracy, geographical knowledge and environmental awareness, we are able to notice the landscape changes or degradation caused in some important Italian areas by human action during recent generations.

Another interesting aspect of Cole's writings on Italy, which emerges from his diaries and letters, is now to be mentioned to complete this rapid panorama of the various facets of his work, which appears geographical in the proper interdisciplinary sense as we intend in the today's accepted meaning. It is his social concern and analysis about Italian people, particularly the poorest class and the difficult life they suffered, that Cole especially describes regarding Rome, the Roman countryside and Sicily.

His Italian pages are full of descriptions about the terrible conditions of peasant women, dressed very poorly, living in squalid, miserable, shabby small houses, and above all working very hard, having "*all the toils of the men. They dig, they reap, they carry heavy...*", as Cole writes in his *Sicilian Diary*.¹¹ But there are also many indications regarding the state of ignorance in which women were kept in Southern Italy, even in the well-off social strata, where the sadness of their situation is showed by those terrible black dresses...The place of women, in Cole's idea of life, is always very central.

Before examining some of Master Cole's paintings to show in practical terms our research, a last consideration is necessary in order to fully understand Thomas Cole's thinking, his geographical concern and the significance of his Italian landscapes.

Arriving in Europe in June 1829, Cole lived for a period in London – before his departure for Italy – just at the right time to have the opportunity to see the first edition of the first volume of Sir Charles Lyell's, *Principles of Geology*, which appeared in January 1830. The book of Lyell, who was the best known of the founders of the so-called erosionism in Physical Geography, aroused an incredible scientific sensation for its revolutionary theory of uniformitarianism, demonstrating the unceasing, everlasting and uniform dynamism active on the earth's surface and the continuous, long-term change of its forms.

The frontispiece chosen by Lyell for his first volume was a view of archaeological Campania, entitled *Present State of the Temple of Serapis at Pozzuoli*, engraved by T. Bradley. All that archaeological area, with a special focus on the bay of Baia, was described by Lyell, in a very impressive chapter, with two important illustrations by the Author, as an unimpugnable document of the "*elevation and subsidence of land on the coast*", proving his theory of continuous terrestrial superficial dynamism; the Temple of Jupiter Serapis was for Lyell, "*in itself alone*", the "*unequivocal evidence, that the relative level of land and sea has changed twice at Pozzuoli since the Christian era...*"¹²

Italian places (Gifford, Whittredge, Bierstadt, Church, Cropsey, Innes). See also in B. Novak, 1995, "*Arcady Revisited: Americans in Italy*", pp. 203-225.

¹¹ From Cole's Archives, "*Journey from Rome to Sicily*", 1842.

¹² Concerning Sir Ch. Lyell's, *Principles of Geology, being an attempt to explain the former changes of the earth's surface, by reference to causes now in operation*, Murray, London, III volumes, 1830, 1832 and 1833, we have to underline that the chapter where the Author deals with the site of Pozzuoli (written as in ancient times *Pozzuoli*), regarded as a natural archives, is in vol. I, which appeared in 1830 (ch. XXV, see pp. 449-459). The vol. II, appeared in 1832, while Thomas Cole in Italy. Considering the success of Lyell's book, we have to remark that, by 1835, four more editions had already been published.

Cole absorbed Lyell's theories: we learned that by examining some pages from his Archives and particularly a pencil sketch, made in 1832 in Pozzuoli, called *Ruins, or the Effects of Time*, with important written notes (Parry III, 1988; Truettner and Wallach, 1994).

After that sketch, in all Thomas Cole's paintings and drawings representing Italian landscapes we observe some archaeological-architectural ruins: this is not because the Master was particularly attracted by the study of antiquity, as he makes clear in his *Essay on American Scenery*, but rather because ruins show the transiency of man and his works, so quickly passing away, in contrast with the long-term dynamism of Nature, with its long and slow modification processes. This important theoretical approach is acutely commented by Cole in a long letter, of November 1833, to his Artistic Patron, Luman Reed, concerning the artistic project of a compositional series of five paintings, the Master had a mind to create, which show a sense of the dramatic transient human times, felt in a silent Nature, always reconstructing itself, especially in the scene he will later call *Desolation*.¹³ The setting of *Desolation* – a canvas finished in 1836 – seems to be historic, probably a reproduction of the ancient Roman site of Baia, an imperial property close to Naples, visited by the Artist in 1832 when he also went to Pozzuoli: an impressive complex, built between the first and the fourth century, boldly modelled by following the shore line and the steep coastal topography with a series of architectonic terraces. Even more than Pozzuoli, that archaeological site could be considered as a strong example of Lyell's theories, for the progressive bradyseism process of that area, having seen alternate periods of submerging and emerging of the coast, which was finally swallowed up by the sea and with it some important parts of the Claudian archaeological levels, which, only very recently, were systematically studied by a group of subaqueous archaeological topographers.

Starting from *Effects of Times*, the long list of Cole's Italian works documents the Philosophy of Nature and History that the Artist was developing. The theme of "past and present", a different dimension in Nature's and Man's history, is represented by Cole as the visible erosion, in a short time, of human creations and constructions, placed in a natural setting, which, on the contrary, goes on apparently unchanged.

This idea solicits another fundamental consideration in studying Master Cole's Italian works: the monuments, which are the marks of civilization of the Old World, are quickly turning into ruins, in opposition to the American Wilderness, which is the true, gigantic, heroic monument of the New World, its *unicum*, which seems to resist the passing of time. The American Wilderness has an evocative power suggesting "the present and the future", while the Italian humanized landscape takes into a dimension "*people with the gigantic associations of the storied past*" as Cole underlines, some years after his first voyage to Italy, in his *Essay on American Scenery*.¹⁴ In Italy – it seems to us – Master Cole was trying to harmonize his American way to feel and think of Nature with the Italian historic landscapes.

Now, going to illustrate some of Cole's paintings, we will have to dwell only in one region, because of limited space of this congress-paper. We will identify a specific area, that is Rome, its countryside and the bordering southern Latium, presenting some examples the better to understand the very interesting geographical and environmental implications offered by this sensitive artist.

Trying to see from Master Cole's point of view, we will admire an urban, open landscape, two views of the Roman Campagna, in the early morning and just before sunset, two mountain views from a special spot in the countryside around Tivoli, a spectacular scenery in ancient Tivoli and finally a poetic curiosity from the lake of Nemi.

¹³ For the theories at the basis of *Desolation*, the fifth and late painting of the series *The Course of Empire*, it exists a Pamphlet written by Cole in 1836, published in the same year by the *American Monthly Magazine* and *The Knickerbocker* to present those paintings to the public.

¹⁴ "*Essay on American Scenery*", see above, note 3.

As can be noted, all these landscapes and scenes we have selected for this congress paper are all evoked in Cole's fascinating verses transcribed at the beginning of our pages.

Thomas Cole arrived in Rome in February 1832. From his notes and correspondence of that period we know he was strongly attracted by the solitary green spot where Shelley, the poet he deeply admired, was resting. The large painting *The Protestant Cemetery in Rome, at Testaccio* shows that secluded area of Rome.

Cole himself appears sitting – in a Roman ancient garment – on the only hill, very small, of the Roman quarter of Testaccio, actually named “Monte dei Cocci” (still existing today although non-visible as it is surrounded by tall buildings!). We have to specify that this hill is manmade, by an historical stratification of broken potteries and building residual materials.

In a letter Cole underlines that the view of the Protestant Cemetery, represented in his paintings, was taken “from Monte Testaccio”. In his pictorial composition, the Artist is reading among the tall, typical Roman cypresses, in front of a spectacular view of the Roman country and mountains, taken under a sunset tender glow. We suppose he was reading one of Shelley's poem: in fact, a fragment of Shelley's poem about the Testaccio Cemetery, transcribed by the hand of Cole, was found among Cole's Paper. Observing the small sitting figure, we feel as if it were a kind of psychological fusion, a transference between Cole and Shelley.¹⁵

Concerning specifically that large panorama, from a strict geographical point of view, I suggest that it was not taken from the very small hill of Testaccio where Master Cole is sitting, observing the romantic Protestant Cemetery, but from the natural high elevation of Gianicolo, situated not far from there, on the other side of the Tiber river and more precisely from the South-East slope of that elevation.

At the very center of Cole's picture we see the perimeter of the Protestant Cemetery (the so-called Cimitero Acattolico). In those days it still had very few tomb-stones since only recently it had been officially permitted by the Pope in the unpopulated area just outside the Aurelian Walls (270-75 A.D.), near the ancient Porta Ostiensis, in the southern section of the town. In the eighteenth century, after a long period of nocturnal, hidden burial, being not admitted by the Roman Catholic Church, it was practically created, in the shadow of the Pyramid of Caius Cestius and against the Aurelian Walls, by an important non-catholic group of intellectuals, artists and diplomats living in Rome.¹⁶

The area of the cemetery was unconsecrated land, solitary and empty, at the border of the papal City, with a special atmosphere – totally different from the vital and noisy baroque city – that we strongly feel observing Master Cole's splendid painting. The place started to be important with the burial of the eldest son, in 1803 and of the younger, in 1807, of Wilhelm von Humboldt, Plenipotentiary Minister of Prussia in Rome. It became a romantic meeting-point for the European intellectuals with the burial of John Keats in 1821 and Shelley's ashes interred near him one year later, and finally a very well-known Roman spot after the burial of Goethe's son, in 1830.

In his canvas Cole captured not only the loneliness of the place, but he fixed some very significant urban-landscape details.

¹⁵ Oil on canvas, 1832-1834, (84.5 x 115cm) from Olana Historic Site, New York collections.

About Cole's feeling for the place, see, from Cole's Archives: *Cole's letter to Hove, November 27th 1833*, Box 1, Fold. 1 “Letters by Cole 1821-1835” and a fragment of a poem from Shelley's on *The Protestant Burying Ground, at Rome*, that Cole comments as an extraordinary illustration of his painting, Box 5, Fold. 2, “Poem and Verses”.

¹⁶ The Pyramid personal funerary monument erected at the end of the first century B.C. by Caius Cestius, following a mode typical in Rome after the war against Egypt (from about 18 to 12 B. C.).

First of all, Cole has documented the original architectonical structure of Porta Ostiensis, which was partly destroyed at the end of the century, in a period affected by a terrible mania for destructive “modernism”. This scenographic Roman imperial gate was broken through its central volume and on its left side in 1888 and, in the following years, until about 1925-1930, in different parts of the older via Marmorata, via Zabaglia and viale di Campo Boario in the Testaccio Quarter. Cole, as well as Ashby with his photographs taken right in the period of destruction, gives a perfect reconstruction of this archaeological situation for ever lost.

Thanks to Cole we also have an idea of the geographical scenery which could be appreciated from there before the cement invasion of that area, operated by recent generations. Among other things, two enormous buildings were constructed close to the Pyramid: the main Post Office of this section of Rome and the Electric Power Central Office.

Before World War II, as the older Roman people can remember, from Testaccio could enjoy a stunning view of the Latium Mountains, South and East of Rome, as well as the tall monuments of the Ancient Appian Way (we can see them in Cole’s painting near the horizon line, on the left of the composition). Far on the right, Cole shows the Roman central

archaeological area of Palatino and the so-called Valle San Gregorio, in front of which we observe the medieval bell-tower of SS. Giovanni e Paolo Basilica, at the top of the ancient Clivus Scaurus: this extraordinary view is obstructed today by the enormous architectonic bulk of FAO offices.¹⁷

The impressive geographical scenery of Cole’s picture is enclosed by the imposing mountain-range of Tiburtini (North) and Prenestini (South), between the valleys of the Tiber and the Aniene rivers, described by Cole with his exceptional precision.

On the right, behind the Cypresses, the view goes up towards the high grounds of the Latium Volcanic area of the Albano Hills. Having passed the large Latina Valley, moving towards the left quadrant of Cole’s painting, the viewer can identify, one after the other, the steep slope of Rocca di Cave (933m a.s.l.), Mount Viglio (2156m a.s.l.) of the Ernici mountain group, far in the back, Mount Costa Gallo (1148m a.s.l.), the typical crest line of Mount Guadagnolo (1218m a.s.l.) and finally, on the very left of Cole’s pictorial composition, the elevations in the back of the historical town of Tivoli.

Today, all of this extraordinary mountainous panorama is only visible from the high stores of the tallest buildings of the Testaccio quarter, while the Roman countryside outside the walls is hardly visible at all.

Examining some other paintings of Master Cole it is possible to follow his probable itinerary from Rome, going south through the Roman Campagna, along the ancient Via Latina towards the hills of Albano and Ariccia, he often mentioned in his writings.

Aqueduct near Rome, painted in 1832¹⁸, shows a first impressive site encountered by Cole, described under the rosy light of a late afternoon, shortly before sunset. This site is actually at the end of the suburbs of Rome, between the main Via Tuscolana, close to Il Quadrato district, and Via Appia Nuova.

¹⁷ SS. Giovanni e Paolo is a Romanic Basilica of the Fourth-Fifth centuries erected on a large Roman imperial house; its campanile was erected in the twelfth century and it was chosen by Cole as a localization-detail, it being one of the most famous in its style for its colourful decorations in coloured marble and glass.

¹⁸ *Aqueduct near Rome*, 1832, oil on canvas (111.34 x 168.88 cm), from the collection of the Washington University Gallery of Art, St.Louis.

In this painting the Artist collected two elements of remarkable antiquarian importance, both situated in the Agro Romano at a small distance from each other: in doing so, he demonstrated to know very well their special history. On the left of the composition an ancient tower dominates. It was one of the most significant monumental area in the Roman countryside before some uncontrolled buildings grew in the post-war period (still visible nowadays!), submerging it, wiping out the solitary attraction emerging from Cole's painting. Its modern name, Tor Fiscale, is still used today.

In the ancient times, in fact, the Aqua Marcia aqueduct, constructed in 144 B.C., was running here, going south-north. When a second aqueduct, the Aqua Claudia, was built in 52 A.D. and passed in this area east-west bound, a spectacular crossing was formed by these two aqueducts, the latter passing over the former having lower arches. At the beginning of the thirteenth century a watch-tower, about 30 meters high, was erected just on that crossing point (that explain the plural name chosen by Cole for this painting). In its quadrangular base a part of a strong reinforcement to the Claudian aqueduct, made in Hadrian's age, is kept from the Claudian aqueduct also an arch of the mentioned crossing point remains today.

In the Middle Ages the tower was controlling the formidable strategic zone called Campus Barbaricus in the late Roman Imperial period, for their ancient Goth settled military camp here during their siege to Rome, in the fifth century. Campus Barbaricus was in fact the area enclosed by the two aqueducts which were crossing in the place of the future Tor Fiscale and, little further, towards the hills, there was a second crossing.

The aqueduct starting from the tower in Cole's painting of 1832 is not what one can observe in reality: from Tor Fiscale starts the Felice aqueduct, erected in 1585 by Pope Sixtus V on the ruins of the above mentioned republican Aqua Marcia. In a photograph taken by the British archaeologist Ashby, about 1890, we can see this clearly, as well as we can see Tor Fiscale just restored.

On the contrary, in Cole's painting another very important Roman aqueduct is represented as starting from Tor Fiscale: it is the Anio Novus, also erected by Claudius in 52 A.D. and connected to the mentioned Aqua Claudia right at the southern border of Campus Barbaricus: in Cole's painting Anio Novus is represented in its best-known section, about three or four km long, running between Campus Barbaricus on the northern side (not far from Tor Fiscale!) and Via delle Capannelle (going to Via Appia Nuova), on the southern side.

It should be noted the extraordinary accuracy of Cole's painting, compared with the photograph of this part of the Anio Novus aqueduct taken 50 years later by Ashby: all the archaeological details of the ruins are perfectly described, even the smallest one, such as the remains of the foot of an arch.

The fascinating site visited by Cole, the solemnness emanating from his painting, do not exist any more. Nothing was left although the monuments still exist in that area. Today this landscape is totally devastated.

Today Tor Fiscale is almost untraceable because it is lost in a tragic built-up area almost looking like a miserable "bidonville" in the Third World; the elegant run of the aqueduct, descending from the Latium Sublacensis mountains, is surrounded by chaotic series of commercial buildings and it is going to be squeezed between the enormous Tuscolano-Appio Claudio-Appio Pignatelli quarters, extending on both sides.

The problem lies Italian legislation, well controlling historical and with monumental centers - from the years before World War II - but not the Italian countryside landscape as a whole. Historic Rome has been well kept, while up to recent years there was no form of tutelage of areas outside the walls and the suburbs, even if literally encrusted with ruins and antiquities. Generally in Italy and especially in the thickly populated zones, as Latium, outside the historic centers the natural features and the human landscape have been wrongly

considered a “second class matter”: from a judicial, administrative point of view, this is the reason why the Agro Romano has been transformed into a kind of “land for sharks”.

Going back to Cole’s painting, the mountain-range delineating the horizon of the picture itself, is, as usual, perfectly analyzed by the Artist. It is the Latium Volcanic complex of the Albano Hills. The viewer can easily recognize that impressive geomorphological area and, thanks to Cole’s accuracy, identify from right to left of the canvas a series of details: the slopes going up to the famous Monte Cavo (949m a.s.l.), in the Albano Hills, towering over the regular range of the Faete mountain; the saddle of Molara; the slopes ascending to the village of Monte Compatri (ca. 600m a.s.l.) and finally, an ancient cone at the margin of the volcanic complex itself, on the left, half-hidden in the back of the ruins of the Roman aqueduct. At a lower level of this mountainous landscape, in the center of the pictorial composition, is also clearly visible to the viewer the hilltop where the village of Rocca di Papa lies (667m a.s.l.), having on the left the line of the so-called Campi di Annibale.

This splendid view proposed by Master Cole was also engraved, in 1833, and became one of the most popular images of Italy for the Americans of the nineteenth century.

In a second oil, dated 1843, painted after Cole’s second tour in Italy and titled *Roman Campagna (Ruins of Aqueduct in the Campagna di Roma)*, the same action of the Anio Novus aqueduct is represented closer and, exactly as in reality, without the anchorage of Tor Fiscale.¹⁹ This time, however, the same landscape is represented under the transparent luminous light of the early morning, with some mist moving up from the foot of the Albano Hill range.

The majestic physical lines of that volcanic area are contemplated from a shorter distance. The panoramic view of them is larger, so that on the very left of the canvas we see the elevation of the village of Colonna (345m a.s.l.) and we distinctly see the slope going up to the village Monte Compatri (576m a.s.l.).

The viewer, continuing from left to right in his detailed examination of the canvas, recognizes the culmination line of an ancient caldera of the Albano volcanic complex, practically in the back of the main central part of the remains of the aqueduct, then the mentioned saddle connecting the localities of Pratoni del Vivaro and Artema, then the long, regular range of Monti delle Faete (ca. 900m a.s.l.) and finally the typical, towering structure of Mount Cavo (949m a.s.l.), at the foot of which there are the scarped hill of Rocca di Papa village and the regular plateau of Campi di Annibale precisely described from a geographical point of view.

Following the line of the aqueduct Anio Novus, the traveller approaches the hilly country of Tivoli and further, going north-west, the series of hills where is the village of Castel Madama, arriving still farther at the Subiaco mountain. In 1832, Cole traveled along this ancient road.

¹⁹ *Roman Campagna*, 1843, oil on canvas (82.5 x 121.9 cm), from the Wadsworth Atheneum collection, Hartford.

Following Master Cole in Latium, other artists of the Hudson River School painted this fascinating natural and archaeological scene, from the same point of observation, as well as the “Cascatelle” of Tivoli (note 22): see, as an example, I. Weiss, 1987.

Two other paintings by Cole, *A View near Tivoli*, 1832, and *The Arch of Nero*, 1846, are representing the higher run of the great aqueduct in a scenographic site selected as a special archaeological point of view.²⁰

Today, visiting this place, we immediately recognize the scene depicted by Cole. The ancient Via Empolitana, connecting Tivoli to Castel Madama, is running at the foot of the hill indicated as Mount Sant' Angelo and passing under two Roman arches: the smaller arch was a part of the Aqua Marcia aqueduct, the higher arch was one of the five arches of the Anio Novus crossing the stream at the point where Via Empolitana was dividing into two different branches, still visible today. In his paintings, Master Cole focuses his attention on the higher arch.

Cole was fascinated by this archaeological site, that, in modern times, was called "Archi", because of the impressive geographical meeting point, where the Aqua Marcia, the Aqua Claudia and the Anio Novus aqueducts – all descending from the upper valley of the Aniene river and from the mountainous area of Subiaco – were crossing with their arches, very close to one another, the deep course of the Empiglione stream (a branch of the Aniene river), arriving just at the foot of the mentioned Mount Sant' Angelo. During medieval times, a still resisting arch of the Anio Novus was fortified with a tower as its top and with a gate, under the arch itself, closing the passage. Cole is representing exactly that situation, today cancelled.

That fortified gate was conserved until the end of last century, when it was destroyed while the tower was restored. The same view of the higher towered arch, but without the gate, appears in a photograph by Ashby, taken between 1885 and 1890.

To understand these paintings by Cole, two letters are also available, describing the scene through the Artist's eyes, with the bridge, a fragment of the Roman aqueduct, that formerly crossed the stream and its remaining arch, over which was built a small watch-tower: here, Cole is indicating the ruined higher arch as "of Nero", but in reality it was a construction made under Emperor Claudius, Nero's step-father. There are also several pages of his sketch-book, with notes about this place, the weather, the colours of nature, as well as those ruins. We have to underline that, in those letters, the Artist is not giving details concerning the mountainous setting he was representing. The place is only mentioned, generically, as a "view near Tivoli", "a morning scene, with the mists rising from the mountains".²¹

In fact, the first of Cole's pictures represents the scenes in the early morning, with the mist rising from the hills, partly covering the mountain in the background.

²⁰ *A View near Tivoli (Morning)*, 1832, oil on canvas (37 x 59 cm), from the New York Metropolitan Museum collections; *The Arch of Nero*, 1846, oil on canvas (152.4 x 121.9 cm) from the Newark Museum collections.

Cole's drawing of the *Arch of Nero*, taken on the spot, mentioned in this essay, is n. 39.565.111 of the Detroit Institute of Arts collections; the drawing showing the *Arch of Nero* in the horizontal composition as in *A View near Tivoli (Morning)*, is n. 39.565.43.

²¹ From Cole's Archives, "Letters by Cole 1821-1835", Box 1, Fold. 1, see: *Cole's letters to Adams*, 5 August and 15 September 1834.

In the letter of 15 September 1834, describing his work of 1832 and the archaeological context of that picture as a "view...taken in the vicinity of Tivoli", Cole goes to write that the geographical scenery he depicted was not "one of those scenes celebrated by travelers or by any historical association – It is merely a picturesque bit that I found in my rambles among the Appennines". Indeed, it is a statement which does not coincide with the impressive mountain landscape he painted in 1832; the "merely a picturesque bit", he wrote about, sounds like a polite phrase for his important acquaintance and art-collector, to whom Cole was giving his painting. This statement seems to be better fitted to the natural setting, effectively less imposing, represented by Cole in his oil painted many years later, in 1846.

About the mountainous scenery depicted by Cole, my opinion is that, especially in the painting of 1832, Cole has emphasized some features of the natural habitat in order to give the “Arch of Nero” a special setting, more impressive and well fitted to that imposing ancient construction, more evocative and powerful than the one existing in reality. In fact, the mountainous horizon line depicted by Cole in 1832, with several ranges of hills and mountains, as if they were enclosing the landscape in a great hemicycle, is not exactly the one we observe from those Roman ruins or from the top of Sant’Angelo hill. In Cole’s composition we can recognize on the left side the shape of Mount Spina Santa (1060m a.s.l.), although its profile looks longer than really it is; in the central part of the picture, the peaks of Mount Guadagnolo (1218m a.s.l.) and Mount Costa Gallo (1148m a.s.l.), even from quite a distance, emerge from behind Mount Spina Santa and they are described faithfully to reality. In the very center of Cole’s canvas, closer to the viewer, a massive, mountainous amphitheater appears and below that we note a very plateau steep. In reality, they are the hills of San Felice, but they are lower than in Cole’s picture (550m a.s.l.) and also less “circular”, with a central elevation less imposing than in Cole’s view (616m a.s.l.). The plateau, which is morphologically related to the Lungherina river, a tributary of the Aniene river, is in reality topographically less prominent than in Cole’s picture; its actual name is Colle San Pietro.

Now, let us analyse and compare the two mentioned paintings, of 1832 and 1846. In the first small picture the archaeological ruins are viewed from a short distance and we can observe the bridge over the Empiglione stream with two more feet of arches well visible. In the second paintings, where the mountainous background is less imposing and the mist disappears leaving an open view to the great mountain enclosing the composition on the left, Cole offers an extraordinary description of the vegetation on the banks of the stream, which colonizes, so to speak, the ancient bridge and the archaeological ruins. This image brings into focus the power of natural forces and, on the other hand, the sense of the transient duration of the works of man.

In the larger picture of 1846 the point of view facing the mountains has also shifted, so much so that the above mentioned mountainous amphitheater partly disappears behind the “Arch of Nero” itself. In this painting, however, the mountainous scenery is treated by Cole more faithfully to reality. On the left side of the canvas the shape of Mount Spina Santa has its natural profile, as well as the hemicycle of Colle San Felice and the plateau of Colle San Pietro, since they appear lower and their sides are less steep, than they really are. Only the peak of Mount Guadagnolo, behind Mount Spina Santa, is painted more important so as to stand out. Cole painted it with a scenic, dented profile in such a way that he makes it look like the well known high Mount Terminillo of the Reatini mountain group. Finally, the mountain top we see in Cole’s two paintings, far away, below the “Arch of Nero”, does not really exist; as a matter of fact, observing the sketch drawn by Cole on the spot, we note that peak is not delineated. In both paintings (1832 and 1846) he adds that peak: evidently he wanted to make stronger the background for the “Arch of Nero”.

As it is evident from the photos we took in summer 1997 and 1998, today this place is an example of landscape bad conservation and use, unforgivable around a historic town such as Tivoli. Environmentally, we want to remark that the Empiglione stream is actually a kind of rubbish container and the uncontrolled growing of infesting vegetation swallows the archaeological remains, while the woods on the hills and lower mountain slopes are cutted down completely. From an archaeological point of view, we have to underline that not only automobiles, but even big trucks and buses, pass under those ancient arches often bumping into their feet.

Through his paintings, we ideally go on following Master Cole's excursions near Rome and we reach, thanks to another large picture, the ancient monumental center of the famous town of Tivoli.

In the early 1830s, while the Artist was in Rome, Tivoli was the object of an impressive project for a new hydraulic arrangement of the local fluvial waters, about which there was a great deal of consideration, especially for the Pope was visiting the sites of these big works and large crowds were coming to Tivoli from all over Latium.²² The painting we will examine now, *I Cascatelli, Tivoli, Looking towards Rome*, a work finished about 1832, is the result of a visit of the Artist during those gigantic and controversial engineering operations, that were at the center of a major debate.²³

The story behind this painting is in fact very long and starts during the Roman times, when the Aniene river was known for its most violent floods and, because of the alluvial soil materials carried away by its waters it changed its course itself. Already at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the river had left its ancient bed at the foot of the temples of the Acropolis of Tivoli (the ancient Tibur), moving towards the inhabited area, just where the Gregorian bridge is today. A new big waterfall started then, and, later on, would inspire the artistic representations of Van Wittel and Piranesi that we greatly admire.

After a sequence of more devastating floods inundating the town, the most serious one was in 1826. Therefore, Pope Leo XII decided to bring into action a program planning big hydraulic works in the center of Tivoli in order to control the river and its dangerous waterfall, especially violent in winter. Between 1828 and 1835, under the governments of Pope Leo XII and Pope Gregory XVI, many enormous works were done and the waters of the Aniene were canalized upstream, before reaching the waterfall. A double tunnel was dug through Mount Catillo, where Tivoli is built, and a very impressive diversion was realized, sending the river Aniene to the other side of town, blocking for ever the old, natural cataract and creating a new waterfall at the top of a deep gorge near an empty and isolated slope. In the period Cole spent in Rome, that new mechanic big waterfall was born, under the name of "central waterfall" or better "Cascata Gregoriana".

Those hydraulic operations totally changed the historical Tivoli's landscape, also taking away some waters from a series of other minor cascades, flowings down along the slopes where, among other historic buildings, is the Roman Temple of Hercules the Victorious.

Differently from what other artists would have done - see for instance the American painter George Loring Brown, in 1850 - Cole decided not to paint this manmade fall. He felt in fact little interest in it.²⁴ Following other known artists working in Latium before he did, such as the German painter Wilhelm Friedrich Gmelin, in 1798, 1807 and 1808, or the American painter Rembrandt Peale, about 1829, he decided to repropose the view of the various small natural cataracts, which were left from the original natural hydro-geological system, coming down like white ribbons along the cliffs of Tivoli having on their top the ancient monuments mentioned above.

They are the "Cascatelli", painted by Cole under the warm light, going into a rosy gold of the setting sun, which illuminates, through an atmosphere physically present at the center of the canvas, the vast expanse of the Campagna Romana.

²² That project - today censured from an ecological point of view - is described in the book published for the centennial of those events *Gregorio XVI e la Cascata dell'Aniene, Un'Impresa di Romano Ardimento*, Atti e Memorie della Società Tiburtina di Storia dell'Arte, Villa d'Este, Tivoli, 1935.

²³ *The Cascatelli, Tivoli, Looking towards Rome*, c. 1832, oil on canvas (83.1 x 102.9 cm), from the collections Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio.

²⁴ Th. E. Stebbins, 1992, pp. 288-290; for Master Peale's *Cascatelle of Tivoli*, see I.B. Jaffe, 1989, plate 2.

Today, observing this area, we have the terrible sensation of what was the wasting use of Latium countryside and minor towns during the last decades.

Today, the “Cascatelli” do not have any more their ribbons of foaming waters: because of hydro-geological impoverishment and stress of the streams in the mountains, due, above all, to extensive deforestation, their waters are constantly decreasing.

A tremendous disorderly town-planning can be observed. For example, enormous buildings block the view of the Roman temple dedicated to Hercules the Victorious as well as the Medieval district of Tivoli, places from where the “Cascatelli” start.

In addition, a hydroelectric power station (also at the foot of the mentioned Acropolis of Tivoli) has destroyed the beautiful valley depicted by Cole. This historical landscape, full of archaeological and artistic allusions, is almost unrecognizable.

Master Cole’s painting, therefore, fixes a moment of this spot in Latium magically preserved. On the contrary, today we have to discover this historical landscape researching the various single pieces composing it among a sea of cement, as we can verify looking at our photographs taken in the summer 1997.

To conclude this tour with Master Thomas Cole in last century Latium, we can make a stop in the large volcanic area of the Colli Albani, which very strongly affected the Artist’s imagination and creativity, as we can notice in reading various papers from his Archives, the poetry we have transcribed at the beginning of our paper as well as a suggestive passage from his *Essay on American Scenery* mentioned above.²⁵

The painting we will now present can be judged as a simple “curiosity”, showing Master Cole’s accuracy in reproducing landscape scenes, but it can also be considered as a real local example of today’s bad use and scarce protection of the countryside landscapes in Latium, even in areas having small density of population and where it could be easier to preserve their historical heritage and monumental properties.

In any case, this splendid painting underlines once more how important the geographical implications in the work of this very sensitive artist can be. This painting is *Il Penseroso (View of Lago di Nemi, near Rome)*²⁶ – a view having a “pendant” in *L’Allegro*, as the Artist is explaining in his correspondence²⁷ -, which express all the solemn atmosphere typical of the small volcanic lakes so secluded and deeply surrounded by mountainous slopes.

In fact, the natural setting of this painting is the solitary volcanic lake of Nemi. The homonymous village, that we clearly recognize in Cole’s picture with all its historical buildings perfectly reproduced, is situated at an altitude just a little below the peak of the so-called Monte Calvarone (672m a.s.l.) divided by a deep morphological cut – named Fonte Cajano – from Monte Alto (676m a.s.l.). Cole’s extraordinary ability in transcribing on his canvas this physical features, even the thick vegetation in the central gorge, allows the viewer of our times to have an immediate recognition of this specific landscape.

Therefore, the most difficult work has been finding the ancient little shrine before which, in Cole’s picture, a young peasant is kneeling, while the evening shadows wrap already that shore of the lake. The scene is proposed in the special dimension of the twilight, which increases the solemnity of that abrupt landscape, covered with dense, woody vegetation. The prayer and meditation of that girl, giving the name to this picture, reinforce

²⁵ See note 3.

²⁶ *Il Penseroso*, 1845, oil on canvas (81.9 x 121.9 cm), from the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art collections.

²⁷ From Cole’s Archives: *Cole’s letter to Ch. Parker*, January 8th, 1844.

L’Allegro, 1845, an oil on canvas practically of the same size, is conserved in the same US Museum.

the contrast between Nature's powerful forms and the "decaying grandeur" of the human works – to underline a theoretical topic of the Artist, quoting himself -.

We talked with some old people in the village and, thanks to them, we had a fruitful snippet of information: the local tobacconist, a regional history-lover!, was especially helpful. In order to find that Madonna's image, following his indications, from Genzano, the village situated on the opposite side of Nemi (not visible in Cole's picture), we drove down the road running along the perimeter of the lake without touching its bank and reached Cole's exact point of view looking at the village of Nemi, from where we took a photograph. _

A section of an ancient Roman road and some ruins of a Roman Villa with a water *cisterna* were thereby. We thought these archaeological ruins could have been attractive elements for Cole, so we stopped. A small convent with a church were built there in the past, but were both destroyed. In that place, today called Santa Maria by the local people, we finally found the little shrine, now not easily distinguishable because it was "reinforced" in its roof and walls with cement! In the fresco the Madonna has her face turned toward the other side, compared to Cole's painting, as by a mirror affect.

Today that shrine is almost transformed in a niche: because it is effectively set in the boundary wall of a lakeside house, which obstructs the view of the lake (many houses in that area seem to have been built without orderly planning).

This alteration dates back to the 1970s, which was the worst period for Italian urban sprawl and environmental disorder and bad administration in conserving the local, cultural heritages. The actual situation reveals also a tremendous environmental disorder along the lake shore with some neglected cultivations and wild vegetation, and also ugly huts.

That is really in opposition to the harmonious lake scenery accurately reproduced by Cole in his poetic painting *Il Penseroso*, and, with that, we conclude our fascinating – but also melancholic – short tour in Latium, viewed through last century's eyes, in search of some lost magnificent historic landscapes and environmental spots.

Figure 3. Thomas Cole, *The Course of Empire: Desolation*, 1836, oil on canvas (99.7 x 160 cm). The New-York Historical Society.



Figure 4. Rome, *Piramide di Caio Cestio e Porta San Paolo*, about 1930, when the demolition of large parts of the Roman walls was not yet concluded. We see Porta San Paolo from Piazzale Ostiense; on the left of the picture, the Roman wall is not yet cut to open the way to via Marmorata (now via R. Persichetti); on the right, we note the XIXth century large opening for the crossing of two main boulevards, Viale Giotto and Viale Piramide Cestia. From Anderson photography collection, Fratelli Alinari Archives, Florence.



Figure 5. Thomas Cole, *The Protestant Cemetery in Rome, at Testaccio or, View of the Protestant Burying Ground, Rome*, oil on canvas, ca. 1832-1834 (84.5 x 115 cm). New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Olana State Historic Site, Taconic Region; Ol. 1981.17.

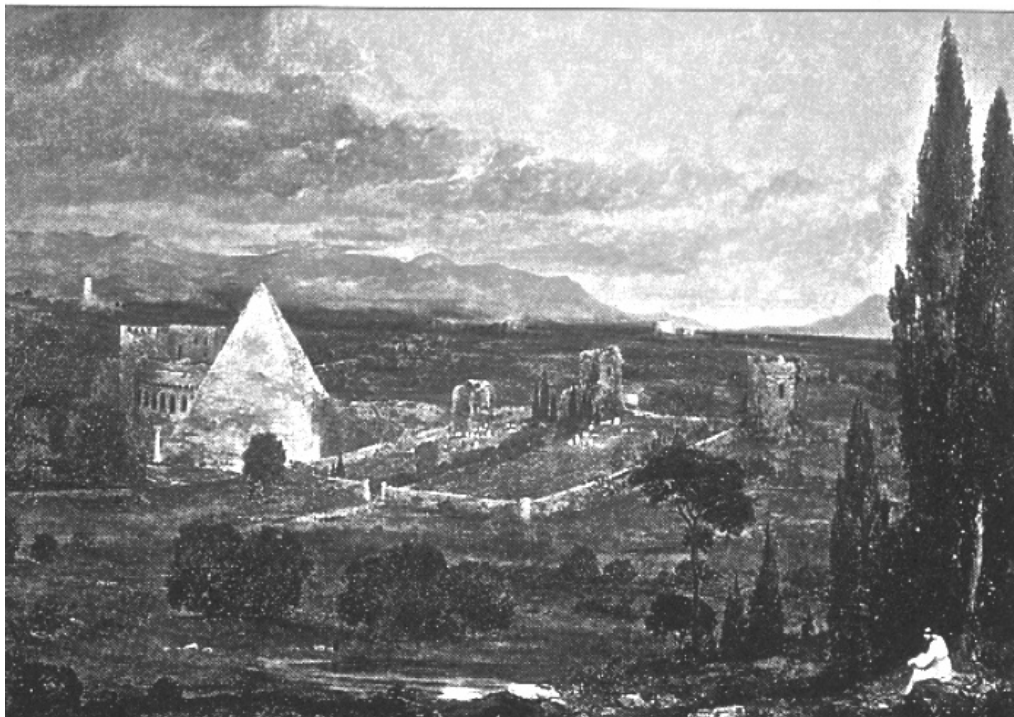


Figure 6. Thomas Cole, *Aqueduct near Rome*, 1832, oil on canvas (111.3 x 168.8 cm). Washington University Gallery of Art, st. Louis. University purchase, Bixby Fund, by exchange, 1987, WU 1987.4.



Figure 7. Thomas Cole, pencil on paper, *Tower, Roman Campagna*, 1832 (31.8 x 22.3 cm), The Detroit Institute of Arts; Founders Society Purchase, W.H. Murphy Fund. 39.565.119. Tor Fiscale in one of Cole's drawings taken "en plein air".

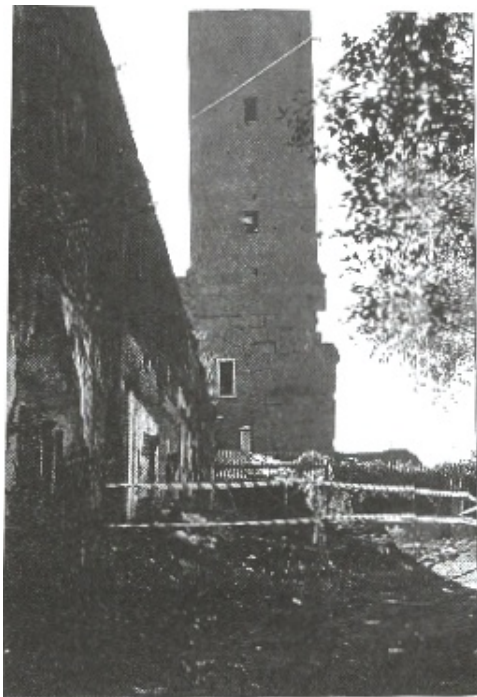
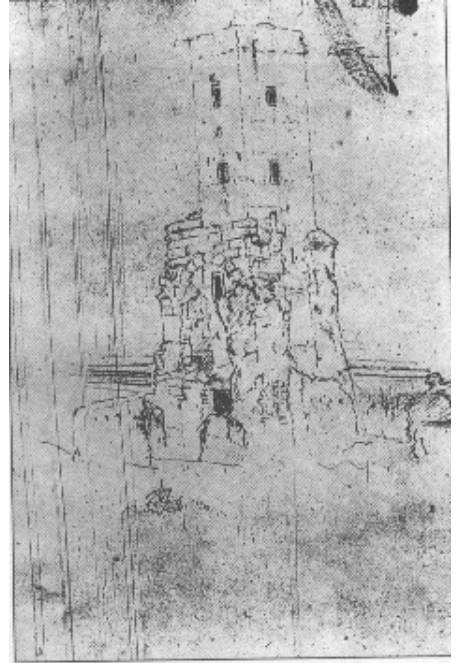


Figure 8. Tor Fiscale today in a degraded landscape (author's picture, taken in 1998).

Figure 9. Thomas Cole, *Roman Campagna (Ruins of Aqueducts in the Campagna di Roma)*, 1843, oil on canvas (82.5 x 121.9 cm). Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut; Bequest of Mrs. Clara Hinton Gould.

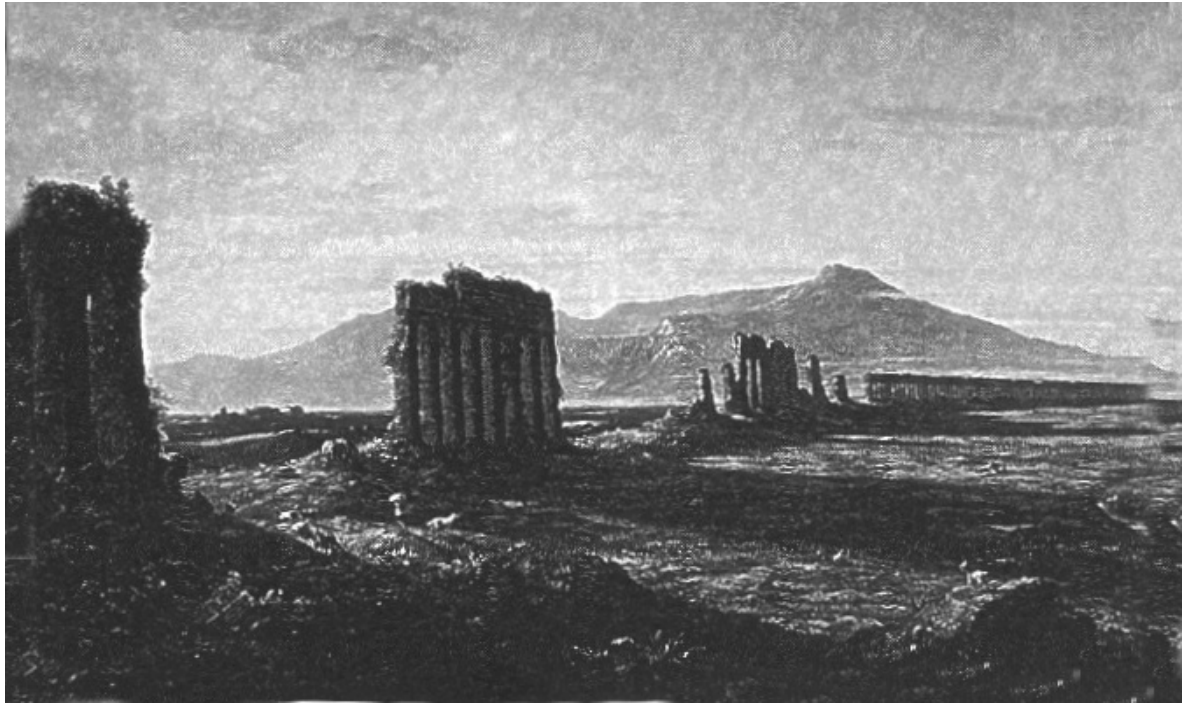


Figure 10. The ruins of the Claudian aqueduct, in a picture taken about 1915. The comparison shows the extraordinary pictorial work of Master Cole. From Brogi collection, Fratelli Alinari Archives, Florence.



Figure 11. Thomas Cole, red crayon on paper, *Ruins of the Claudian Aqueduct, Roman Campagna*, 1832 (22.3 x 31.8 cm), The Detroit Institute of Arts; Founders Society Purchase, W. H. Murphy Fund, 39.565.120.

The Anio Novus aqueduct in one of Cole's drawings taken "en plein air".

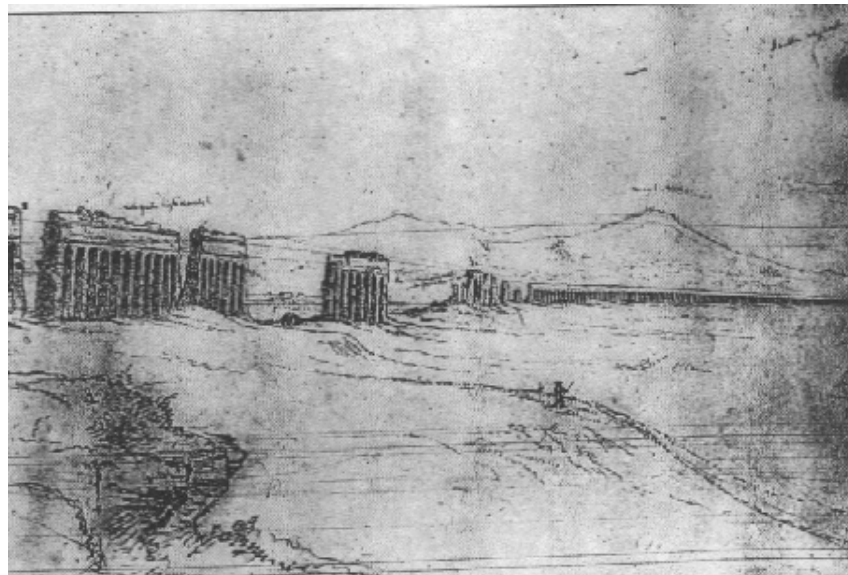


Figure 12. A picture, taken in 1998, showing the landscape around the Anio Novus aqueduct today (from the author's photographic collection).

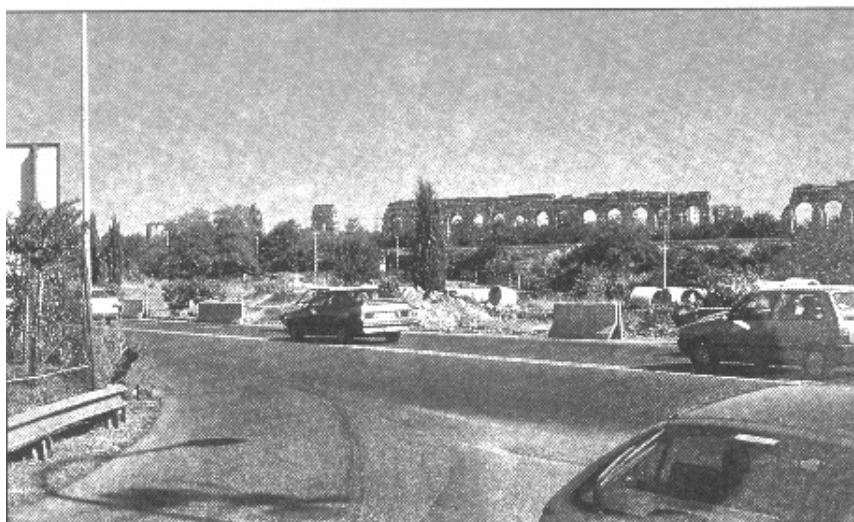


Figure 13. Thomas Cole, *A View near Tivoli (Morning)*, 1832 oil on canvas (37 x 59 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Rogers Fund, 1903 (03.27).

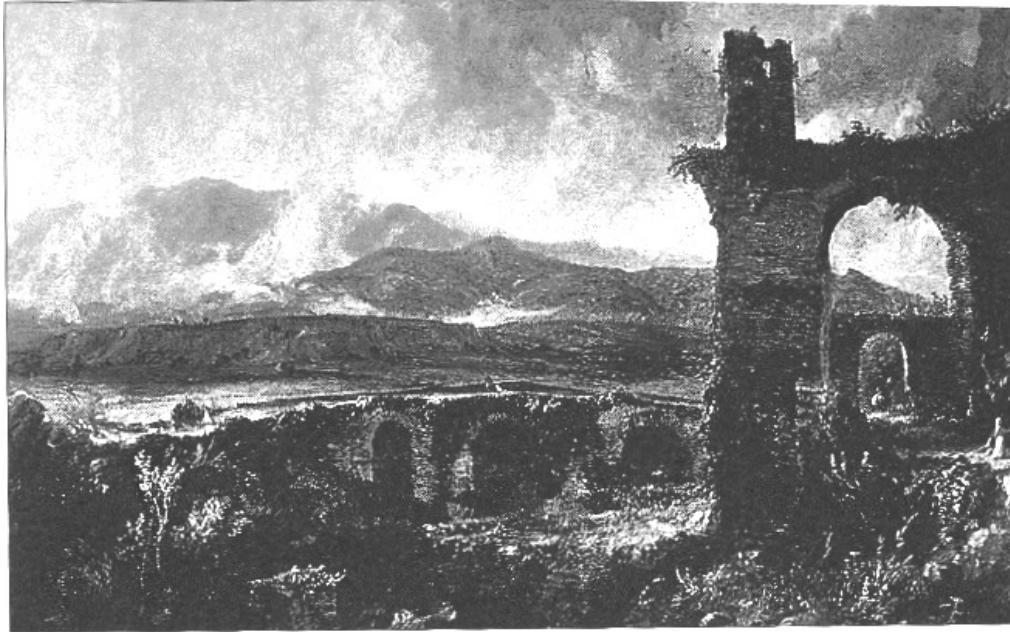


Figure 14. Thomas Cole, *The Arch of Nero*, 1846, oil on canvas (152.4 x 121.9 cm). The Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey/Art Resource, New York (Collection of The Newark Museum, 57.24, Sophronia Anderson Bequest Fund).



Figure 15. The “Arch of Nero” in a picture taken in 1998 (from the author’s photographic collection).



Figure 16. Thomas Cole, *The Cascatelli, Tivoli, Looking towards Rome*, ca. 1832, oil on canvas (83.1 x 112.9 cm). Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio; Gift of Mr. And Mrs. Walter Knight Sturges and Family.



Figure 17. A picture, taken in 1998, showing the setting along the slopes of ancient Tivoli around the famous “Cascatelli”, today practically dried up (from the author’s photographic collection).

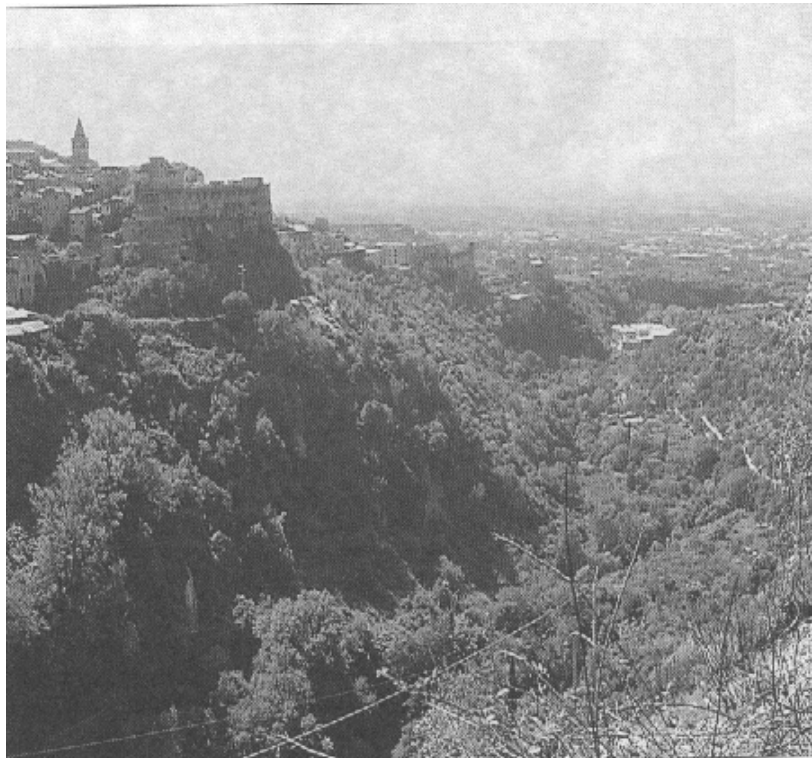


Figure 18. Thomas Cole, *Il Penseroso*, oil on canvas, 1845 (81.9 x 121.9 cm). Los Angeles Country Museum of Art; Trustees Fund, Museum Acquisitions Fund, Corporate Donors Fund, M. 80.115.

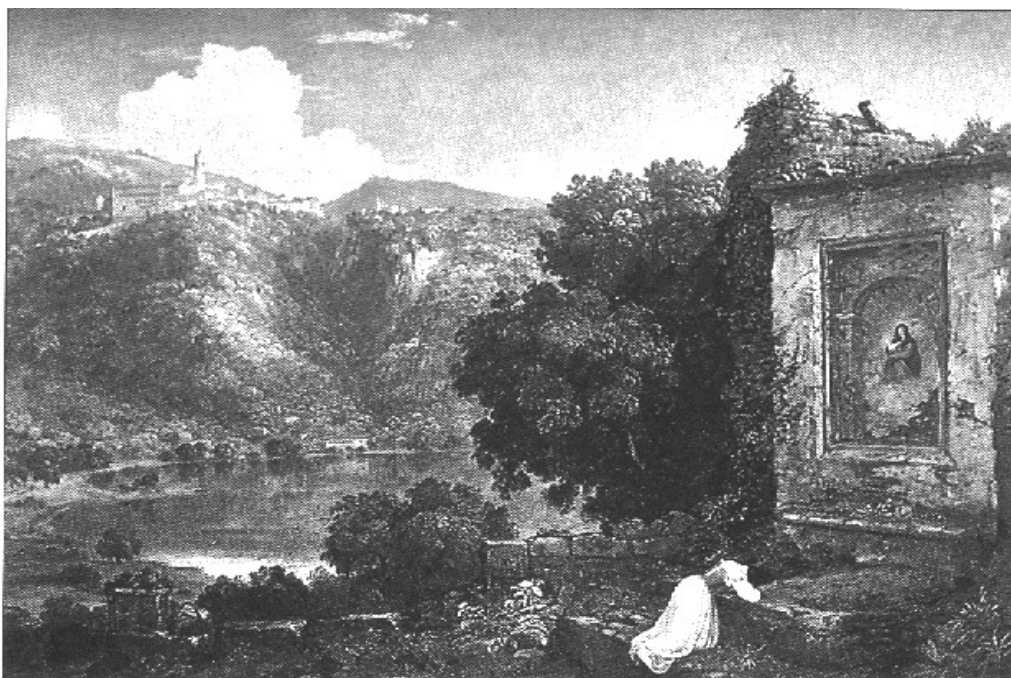


Figure 19. The village and lake of Nemi, near Rome, taken in a picture, in 1998, from the same point of view of Master Cole's painting (from the author's photographic collection).



Figure 20. Today Cole's Madonna, practically set in a cement boundary wall of a recently built house (from the author's photographic collection).



Our thanks and congratulations to the Roman *Società Internazionale Aerofotogrammetria e Topografia* (SIAT) for the precious collaboration in providing the aerophotogrammetrical material and maps fruitfully used for our research.

References

- British School at Rome, Ministero Beni culturali e ambientali, Ist. centrale catalogo (1986), *Thomas Ashby. Un Archeologo fotografa la Campagna di Roma, tra '800 e '900*, Rome, De Luca Editore.
- Dunwell F.F. (1993), "Thomas Cole: Inspiration for the Environmental Movement", in Ch. T. Robinson, pp. 37-43.
- Flexner J. Th. (1970), *History of American Painting*, Coll. Vol. III, *That Wilder Image, The Native School from Thomas Cole to Winslow Homer*, Dover, New York, II ed.
- Jaffe I. B. (ed.) (1989), *The Italian Presence in American Art, 1760-1860*, New York, Fordham University Press.
- Howat J.K. (ed.) (1987), *American Paradise. The World of the Hudson River School*, Metropolitan Museum of Art Coll., New York.
- Miller P. (1955), "The romantic dilemma in American nationalism and the concept of Nature", *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. XLVIII, pp. 239-253.
- (1965), *The Life of the Mind in America, from the Revolution to the Civil War*, Harcourt, Brace & World.
 - (1967), *Nature's Nation*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.
 - (1984), *Errand into the Wilderness*, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge Mass., II ed.
- Nash R. (1982), *Wilderness and the American Mind*, New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Novak B. (1979), *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century. Realism, Idealism and the American Experience*, Harper & Row Publ., New York, Icon Editions.
- (1995), *Nature and Culture, American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875*, Oxford University Press, New York, Revised Edition.
- Oraezie Vallino F. Ch. (1993), "Alle Radici dell'Etica Ambientale: pensiero sulla Natura, Wilderness e creatività artistica negli Stati Uniti del XIX secolo", *Storia dell'Arte*, n. 78, pp. 183-257 and n. 79, pp. 355-410.
- Parry III E. C. (1988), *The Art of Thomas Cole, Ambition and Imagination*, Associated University Presses, Cranbury NJ, pp. 144-145.
- (1989), "On Return from Arcadia", in I. B. Jaffe (ed.), pp. 106-131.
- Powell E. A. (1990), *Thomas Cole*, Abrams, New York.
- Robinson Ch. T., Curator G. (1993), *Thomas Cole: Drawn to Nature*, Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany.
- Stebbins Th. E. Jr. (ed.) (1992), *The Lure of Italy. American Artists and the Italian Experience 1760-1914*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Abrams, Inc., Publs.s, New York.
- Truettner W.H. and Wallach A. (1994), *Thomas Cole. Landscape into History*, New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Tymn M. B. (1972), *Thomas Cole Poetry*, Liberty Cap Books, York, Penn.
- (1980), *Thomas Cole. The Collected Essays and Prose Sketches*, The John Colet Press.
- Weiss I. (1987), *Poetic Landscape. The art and experience of Sanford R. Gifford*, Newark.
- Wilmerding J. (ed.) (1989), *American Light. The Luminist Movement 1850-75*, National Gallery of art, Washington DC.